

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 07628 031217Z

53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 OMB-01

RSR-01 /064 W

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R 030945Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6372

INFO CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS ANNOUNCES USE OF SECRET BALLOT IN BARANGAY
REFERENDUM

REF: MANILA 7512

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS SIGNED DECREE NO. 229 (COPY POUCHED
EA/PHL) ON JULY 1 SETTING FORTH PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED
IN JULY 24 AND JULY 27 VOTING BY 35,000 BARANGAYS (CITIZENS
ASSEMBLIES) THROUGHOUT PHILIPPINES. VOTING WILL FOLLOW
DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AT BARANGAY MEETINGS HELD PRIOR
TO REFERENDUM DATES. MOST PROMINENT FEATURE OF THIS LENGTHY
AND DETAILED DECREE IS PROVISION FOR SECRET BALLOTING
ON BOTH DATES. VOTERS WILL BE GIVEN OFFICIAL BALLOT,
SIGN NAME ON REGISTRATION LIST, MARK BALLOT SECRETLY IN
PRIVATE BOOTH, AFFIX THUMBMARK TO SEPARABLE NUMBERED
COUPONS AND THEN RETURN TO CHAIRMAN OF BARANGAY REFERENDUM
COMMITTEE WHO WILL DEPOSIT IN BALLOT BOX. SEPARATE BALLOT
BOXES FOR 15-18 AND 18 AND ABOVE AGE GROUPS WILL BE PROVIDED.

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PAGE 02 MANILA 07628 031217Z

WM DECREE ESTABLISHES BARANGAY REFERENDUM COMMITTEE TO

CONDUCT VOTING AND COUNT AND REPORT RETURNS. COMMITTEE WILL BE COMPOSED OF COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) REPRESENTATIVE AS CHAIRMAN, ONE MEMBER OF BARANGAY OR BARRIO COUNCIL AND ONE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER. NO MORE THAN FIVE LOCAL OBSERVERS MAY BE DESIGNATED BY COMELEC IN EACH BARANGAY TO GUARD AGAINST IRREGULARITIES. AT CONCLUSION OF VOTING, COMMITTEE WILL COUNT BALLOTS AND PREPARE REPORT OF RESULTS FOR TRANSMISSION TO COMELEC, WHICH WILL RECEIVE CERTIFIED RESULTS OF REFERENDUM FROM THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND PROCLAIM NATIONAL RESULTS.

3. DECREE ALSO LISTS TWENTY-SIX OFFENSES CONNECTED WITH THE REFERENDUM AND PUNISHABLE BY ONE TO SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT, INCLUDING FAILURE TO VOTE WITHOUT JUSTIFIABLE EXCUSE AND INTERFERENCE BY ANY FOREIGNERS, CIVILIANS, AND MILITARY OR POLICE OFFICIALS IN CONDUCT OF MEETINGS, VOTING, AND REPORTING OF RESULTS.

4. COMMENT. LATEST DECREE IN EFFECT CONSTITUTES ELECTION CODE FOR FUTURE BARANGAY REFERENDA. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED ARE AS YET UNKNOWN BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY MAY BE SO INNOCUOUS OR SO DESIGNED AS TO ASSURE DESIRED RESULTS EVEN UNDER SECRET BALLOTING. IN ANY EVENT, ADOPTION OF SECRET VOTING PROCEDURES APPEARS INTENDED REDUCE POTENTIAL DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF JULY REFERENDA.
HAMILTON

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